Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

SERVICE PLAN

2002 to 2004

Stephen Bullock, Chair, Management Authority

Rick Morley, Member, Management Authority

JAN 31, 2002

Date approved

Planning Context

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area - The Legacy

The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA) is a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre) area of provincial Crown land that has been set aside and reserved under the *Creston Valley Wildlife Act* for the purpose of *"wildlife conservation, management and development, and . . . in particular as a waterfowl management area"*.

The CVWMA is situated along the Kootenay River between the Selkirk and Purcell mountains in proximity to the Town of Creston, BC. It was born out of the sustained commitment and enthusiasm of a handful of persistent conservationists, biologists and Creston Valley residents who recognized the importance of Duck Lake and the adjoining wetlands as critical wildlife habitat, especially for nesting and migratory waterfowl. In 1942 they began what would be 26 years of struggle with friends, neighbours, powerful organizations, businesses and government ministries to prevent the loss of this irreplaceable wildlife habitat to drainage for agricultural expansion, and water level fluctuation for hydro-electric developments. They never lost sight of their goal of having this precious wetland area reserved and maintained for wildlife conservation, and in 1968 their efforts were finally rewarded – the *Creston Valley Wildlife Act* was proclaimed and the habitat, at last, secured.

With the help of Ducks Unlimited and BC Hydro work then began constructing a system of dykes, control structures, and pumps to create a series of managed wetland compartments to manage flood and drought cycles in a manner which would enhance wildlife production and prevent the loss of wildlife use that would otherwise occur because of the changed management of the Kootenay River system for hydro-electric power generation and flood control.

Management of the water levels within these compartments acts to maintain a rich diversity of habitat, resulting in the CVWMA now noted for helping to support more than 265 species of birds, 50 species of mammals, 30 species of fish, reptiles, and amphibians, thousands of species of invertebrates, and several hundred species of plants -- including species which are identified as rare or endangered. So rich and diverse is this area, that in 1994 the governments of Canada and British Columbia jointly sponsored and successfully achieved the official designation of this area as a Ramsar site -- a wetland of accredited international significance – under the international Ramsar Convention on wetland conservation.

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area - The Organization

The *Creston Valley Wildlife Act* establishes the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area as a legal entity, and the Management Authority as the governing body responsible for the ongoing management of the area. The Management Authority is comprised of:

- a provincial member appointed by the BC Minister of Water, Land, and Air Protection.

- a federal member appointed by the Minister of Environment Canada, and
- a public member appointed by the BC Minister of Water, Land, and Air Protection., if that minister so chooses

Management of the CVWMA is therefore a uniquely cooperative effort involving not only two levels of government but also the public.

At present, the Management Authority puts its management responsibility into effect through the Area Manager, and a small complement of staff who have the delegated authority to manage the day to day affairs of operating the CVWMA. Their work in turn is supported through seasonal and contract employees, and a pool of energetic and committed volunteers.

Funding History

When the CVWMA was originally established the cost of operating the area was shared between the government of Canada and British Columbia. Their funding supported all maintenance and operating costs, equipment purchases, habitat management activities and approximately 7 full-time staff positions. In addition to this funding arrangement, in the mid-1970's the Canadian Wildlife Service constructed the Wildlife Centre from which it operated year round public information, education and interpretation programs through its own staff of approximately 6 full time positions. And so things continued for nearly a decade, until in the mid-1980's the Canadian Wildlife Service withdrew from operating the Wildlife Centre prompting the Management Authority to take on the facilities and programs. Despite the departure of the Canadian Wildlife Service from Wildlife Centre operations, funding continued for another decade under the original cost shared arrangement between the federal and provincial governments without a commensurate increase to offset the additional financial burden assumed by the Management Authority.

In 1993, just as the CVWMA was about to receive its prestigious Ramsar designation, the federal government, faced with public pressure to reduce the mounting deficit and cut spending, trimmed back its share of funding. The following year the province followed suit. After two years of federal and provincial funding cutbacks, in 1995 the Government of Canada withdrew completely its financial support for the CVWMA, and the Government of British Columbia countered by chopping its funding to half its original commitment, throwing the CVWMA into a financial crisis.

For the next two years operation of the CVWMA and the Wildlife Centre teetered at the edge of financial ruin and abandonment. Only through local action was the CVWMA spared from closure. In March 1997, spearheaded by BC Hydro, a group of concerned corporate leaders, citizens and ardent supporters formed the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area Working Group (Working Group). The Working Group set for itself three goals: first to secure emergency funding to stave off the impending closure of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, second to obtain a bridging solution to annual financial crises, and third to find a long-term funding solution.

During 1997 the Working Group achieved its first goal by raising over $135,000, which the Government of British Columbia met with a matching grant, to keep the CVWMA open for yet another year. The second goal was achieved April 1998 when a bridging solution was secured in the amount of $300,000 per year from BC Hydro at the direction of the British Columbia Ministry of Employment and Investment. This money is to be provided each year until the CVWMA is financially self sufficient through its own fund generating efforts. The Working Group met its third goal in 1999 when it recommended the CVWMA solve its long-term funding requirements by focusing on building its endowment fund (already established with the Vancouver Foundation) to a value where the BC Hydro annual grant can be replaced by interest income generated from the endowment fund -- (requiring a fund investment of approximately $6 million). The Working Group also recommended establishment of a board of directors to spearhead this major fund-raising effort.

Key Strategic Issue

As a result of the withdrawal of Government of Canada and Government of British Columbia funding, the CVWMA has been handed a challenge of significant proportion. The CVWMA, if it is to continue to survive must successfully make the transition from operating like a government agency supported by government funding, to one of operating like a not-for-profit organization responsible for generating its own funds. The ongoing annual operating grants from BC Hydro and a supplementary grant from the Town of Creston are thankfully helping to bridge the gap and make this transition possible.

OUR MANDATE

Our mandate is the specific responsibility that has been formally delegated to us. It defines what we must do.

Enabling

Our mandate is derived from British Columbia's *Creston Valley Wildlife Act*. Through it we have been delegated legal authority to manage the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**, a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre) area of provincial Crown land located along the Kootenay River system in proximity to the Town of Creston, British Columbia.

We must . . . put into effect and uphold the spirit and intent of the *Creston Valley Wildlife Act* and any regulations enacted under that Act in our management of the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**. Specifically, we must maintain and develop the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** for the purpose of "*wildlife conservation, management and development . . . and, in particular, as a waterfowl management area*" [*see s. 7(1), and s. 2(1) of the Creston Valley Wildlife Act*].

Constraining

The way in which we deliver our primary mandate is shaped by various legal obligations that set conditions and constraints. Most notable among these is the international *Ramsar Convention* on wetland conservation, to which the Government of Canada is a signatory, and under which the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Province of British Columbia, successfully sponsored the nomination of the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** as a wetland site of international significance.

> **We must** . . . manage the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** in a manner that maintains those values which make the area a wetland of international significance and preserves its status as a designated Ramsar site under the *Ramsar Convention* on wetland conservation.

Further,

> **We must** . . . work within the regulatory framework, contracts, and agreements which guide our actions and decisions as we carry out our business of managing the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**, including, but not limited to:

- BC Wildlife Act
- BC Dyke Maintenance Act
- Canada Migratory Bird Convention Act
- Canada Fisheries Act
- Canada Wildlife Act
- Canada Navigable Waters Protection Act
- Duck Lake Dyking District Agreement
- International Joint Commission Order
- Ducks Unlimited Agreement
- Canada Income Tax Act
- BC Financial Administration Act
- BC Budget Transparency and Accountability Act
- BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- employment legislation / labour standards
- permits, agreements, contracts (terms and conditions)

OUR MISSION

Our mission describes the fundamental purpose of our organization. It is the reason we exist.

We exist to. . . manage the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** – a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre) wetland of international significance – for conservation and natural species diversity through active habitat and wildlife management, research, education and public support.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a description of the organization we strive to become. Our actions and decisions will lead us in this direction as we transform into our envisioned future state.

We are . . .

Financially secure We forge and perpetuate partnerships which offer value to our partners and collectively give us the financial stability we need to concentrate on managing the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area for wildlife conservation, species diversity, scientific study, education, interpretation, recreation, use and enjoyment

Supported by the public We reach out to, and serve, a global community, and as a result enjoy strong support from the public for the wildlife conservation work we do, the knowledge we gain, the information we share, the public programs we offer, and facilities we provide.

Vigilant guardians We are mindful of the impassioned struggle which led to the creation of the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**, and we are vigilant guardians and managers of the richly diverse landscape with which we have been entrusted, so we can pass on a lasting and inspiring legacy of wildlife conservation to future generations

Effective Managers We are specialists in the management of habitat and species; our efforts contribute to species diversity and the restoration of threatened or endangered native species.

Resourceful We are creative in our thinking, adaptable in our methods, collegial in our actions, and prudent in our utilization of the financial and human resources through which our work is accomplished

OUR VALUES

Our values are important to us. They are the fundamental principles which guide our decision, actions and behaviours as we carry out our work managing the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**.

We believe in:

Responsible Stewardship We embrace our legal obligation to be wise stewards and responsible, accountable managers of the rich natural heritage and diverse landscapes that comprise the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** – carrying forward a legacy of wildlife conservation

Fiscal Prudence We are efficient and effective in our utilization of the limited, hard earned, financial resources through which our work is accomplished

Building Partnerships We build strong partnerships by being a good neighbour and by treating our funding partners and volunteers with respect, providing them opportunities to derive value from their association with the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**

Education and Awareness We are passionate in our efforts to expand our knowledge about the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**, its biota and the results of our management actions, and equally passionate about sharing the knowledge we gain – creating a vibrant outdoor living classroom

Quality Work Environment We establish and maintain a high quality work environment, where creativity and innovation are encouraged, individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and people work collegially and cooperatively to achieve common goals

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve our Vision, the major thrusts of our organization over the next five (5) years will be:

A. Habitat / Wildlife Management to maintain species and habitat diversity

B. Public Outreach to extend the reach and impact of public programs and marketing

C. Fund Development to enhance and expand fund development efforts and work towards building the endowment fund as the long-term funding solution

D. Business Processes to revitalize the organization and improve its preparedness for fund development

OUR GOALS

The results that we expect to achieve in each of these four (4) areas of strategic priority have been further defined and expressed in terms of twelve (12) specific and measurable goals

A Habitat / Wildlife Management Goals

To maintain habitat and species diversity we will . . .

A1 **Re-establish by the end of 2005 habitat management and monitoring programs, specifically:**

a) **a regular ongoing program of active habitat management** to improve habitat conditions and keep them in an optimal state for wildlife use and production, and

b) **a comprehensive program for the systematic monitoring of wildlife habitat, wildlife populations, and human use levels** to be better able to

measure and assess the effects of management efforts and identify opportunities for habitat and wildlife management improvements.

A2 **Upgrade and or replace aging habitat management infrastructure (dykes, gates, culverts, pumps etc.) and field equipment on a priority basis by the end of 2005** to maintain infrastructure and equipment in a sound condition and avoid the disastrous effects of sudden habitat loss, and the significant problems and costs that would ensue from infrastructure and/or equipment failure.

A3 **Develop a list of research priorities by the end of 2003** to be used as a basis from which to encourage Universities, other organizations or individuals to design, implement and fund research projects that would lead to improvements in habitat management and wildlife conservation, or contribute to scientific knowledge about the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

B Public Outreach Goals

To extend Public Outreach we will . . .

B1 **Increase visitation to the Wildlife Centre from a current level of 11,000/yr to 13,500/yr by the end of 2002, with special emphasis on the shoulder seasons of May, September and October while maintaining current levels of visitation during the peak summer season of June, July and August** in order to build a broader base of awareness, appreciation and support for the CVWMA, and its habitat management and wildlife conservation work.

B2 **Continue to operate educational programs at capacity levels on an ongoing basis**, ensuring programs provide a quality educational experience and support the changing curriculum requirements of schools and colleges

B3 **Establish and maintain a market research function by the end of 2002** in order to ensure limited marketing resources are targeted to the most promising market segments in a manner that yields optimum impact and effect in terms of visitation and support.

B4 **Make improvements to public facilities (boardwalks, bridges, Wildlife Centre building, etc) on a priority basis by the end of 2003** to ensure public facilities are maintained in a clean, safe condition.

C Fund Development Goals

To enhance Fund Development we will . . .

C1 **Expand donor support from a donor base of 700 to 2,000 by the end of 2005** to spread out and reduce fund development risk

C2 **Increase the amount of annual donor support from $30,000/yr to $100,000/yr by the end of 2005** to be able to pay for deferred habitat / wildlife management work, essential upcoming capital upgrade and replacement projects, and enhanced educational programs and visitor facilities.

C3 **Build the endowment fund from a current balance of $100,000 to a total value of $6 million, with an interim goal of $2 million by the end of 2005**, to provide a sound base of financial security and ensure the CVWMA is in a position to be able to manage significant funding or spending anomalies that may arise in the future (e.g. loss of a major funding partner, undertaking a major unplanned capital project).

D Business Processes Goals

To revitalize Business Processes we will . . .

D1 **Establish a volunteer committee by the end of 2002** whose primary function will be to enhance the CVWMA's fund development efforts specifically in helping raise funds for the endowment fund.

D2 **Commence a program of annual Business Planning by the end of 2002** to transform strategies from the Strategic Plan as well as ongoing business activities into specific action plans and budgets in order to clarify and make apparent future programs, activities and funding requirements and to be better able to link identified funding needs with fund development efforts.

D3 **Update office technology by the end of 2002** to resolve telecommunication difficulties, and improve database capture and manipulation capabilities to be able to better support expanded fund development, marketing, and public outreach programs.

Goals, Objectives, Key Strategies, Performance Measures and Targets

Goals & Objectives	Strategies	Measures	Targets Year 2002/03	Year 2003/04	Year 2004/05
Wildlife/habitat management goal: To maintain habitat and species diversity					
Re-establish regular ongoing program of active habitat management	Asses habitat and wildlife use of each unit to establish and prioritize habitat enhancement needs while paying particular attention to the needs of wetlands	Priority list developed or revised for habitat enhancement projects	•	•	•
	Find granting agencies which will assist with funding habitat enhancement programs	submitted to potential funders	•	•	•
	Reintroduce habitat enhancement programs as funding becomes available	Hectares of habitat enhanced	25	50	75
Re-establish program for systematic monitoring of habitat, wildlife populations & human impact	Use aerial surveys as a primary means of measuring wildlife response to habitat changes	Number of aerial surveys conducted	10	15	25
	Research and select a cost effective procedure for recording habitat changes	Trials conducted & technique selected	•		
		Implement techniques for monitoring habitat changes		•	•
	Research and select cost effective equipment and procedures for monitoring human use for purposes of assessing human impact	Number of monitors installed	2	3	3
	Contract a biologist to assist with wildlife surveys, evaluation and development of habitat management prescriptions	FTEs	0.25	0.5	0.75
Upgrade / replace aging habitat management infrastructure and equipment	Work with Ducks Unlimited, an existing partner, and seek out other partnerships to design and fund the infrastructure requirements	List of needs, priorities, and cost estimates	•		
		Secure funding / partnerships		•	•
		Upgrade or replace infrastructure components			•
Develop list of research priorities	List will be developed by a contract biologist and Area Manager and used in conjunction with other marketing material to encourage more research in the CVWMA	List of research subjects		•	
Public Outreach goal: To extend Public Outreach					
Increase visitation to Wildlife Centre to 13,500	Increase the information and entertainment value of programs and displays to promote visitor enjoyment and interest in the CVWMA	Visitor days at Wildlife Centre	13,500	13,500	13,500
	Maintain an effective curriculum based school program	Number of students visiting	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Enhance value & effectiveness of off-site information programs	Size of newsletter circulation	8,200	8,300	8,400
Establish a market research function	Research promising market segments and survey visitors to determine cost effectiveness of marketing programs	Establish baseline data on the amount spent per visitor for marketing	•		
Make improvements to public facilities to ensure safety and enjoyment	Develop an attractive and cost effective design for major upgrade requirements that will be attractive to potential funders	Repair / replace boardwalk to Wildlife Centre	•	•	
	Re-examine the need for aging facilities with high maintenance requirements or look for more cost effective alternatives	Remove foot bridge to LP trail and reroute trail	•		
Fund Development Goal: To enhance fund development					
Expand donor support from a donor base of 700 to 2,000 by the end of year 2005	Recruit new donors from visitors to the Wildlife Centre and reduce attrition of existing donors through implementation of attractive projects. Effectively communicate the value or need for projects. Produce the highest possible value for each dollar contributed. Update and maintain effective donor recognition programs	Size of donor base	1,070	1,320	1,620

			Year 2002/03	Year 2003/04	Year 2004/05
Increase annual donations from $30,000/yr to $100,000/yr by the end of year 2005	Increase number of donors and develop the confidence of donors through implementation of attractive projects and programs and effectively communicate the need for them. Produce highest possible value for each dollar contributed.	Annual contribution from individuals	48,600	61,800	78,600
Build the endowment fund to a total value of $6 million with an interim goal of $2 million by the end of year 2005	Promote the fund among donors and hold a major campaign drive no later than 2005. This will provide time to develop a donor base of sufficient size, have a fund development committee in place, and to plan and find funding for a campaign	Size of endowment fund	172,700	212,500	261,300
Business Process Goal: To revitalize business process					
Establish volunteer Fund Development Committee	Invite major corporations or organizations with an interest in conservation who have the human and financial resources available to assist the CVWMA in its fund development efforts.	Committee members recruited	*		
Commence program of annual business planning	Transform strategies into specific action plans and budgets	Business plans prepared or modified	*	*	*
Update office technology	To resolve telecommunication difficulties and improve database capture and manipulation capabilities and desktop publishing capability	Identify & purchase products needed	*		

Financial Outlook Summary

	Year 2002/03	Year 2003/04	Year 2004/05
REVENUES			
Fund Development			
Grants	362,000	369,000	376,000
Endowment Fund	5,000	5,000	5,000
Donations	49,000	62,000	79,000
TOTAL	416,000	436,000	460,000
Public Outreach			
Wildlife Centre	46,000	47,000	48,000
Gift Shop	27,000	28,000	29,000
TOTAL	73,000	75,000	77,000
Business Processes			
Operations	39,000	39,000	39,000
Interest	15,000	15,000	15,000
TOTAL	54,000	54,000	54,000
TOTAL	543,000	565,000	591,000
EXPENDITURES			
Habitat/Wildlife Management	126,000	141,000	159,000
Public Outreach	268,000	273,000	278,000
Fund Development	51,000	52,000	53,000
Business Processes	92,000	93,000	94,000
E. Fund donation	6,000	6,000	7,000
TOTAL	543,000	565,000	591,000